

REMARKS

Claim 29 has been added.

The other claims have been amended to correct their dependency, and to correct an informality noted by the Examiner with respect to claim 24.

Claims 21-29 are pending.

The specification has been amended to correct various informalities noted by the Examiner. The section entitled "Cross Reference to Related Applications" has been corrected, as suggested by the Examiner, to indicate that the pending application is divisional rather than a continuation.

Claims 21-28 were rejected as indefinite because of the language "at a periphery part of the illumination" in claim 21.

Regarding the language in claim 21 of providing a blowing means "at a periphery part of the illumination," an example of that feature is illustrated in FIG. 1 where the illumination is identified by 25, and the blow mechanism is identified by 31.

The Office action (at the top of page 3) mistakenly asserts that the "entire" apparatus should be exposed to the illumination. Instead, as explained in the specification, the lead frame 34 and semiconductor elements 35 are illuminated via the opening 24 so that images can be obtained from the reflected light (bottom of page 15).

The specification explains how the blow mechanism can prevent fluctuation of the inert gas (*see, e.g.*, pages 17-19). As noted at the bottom of page 18 with respect to FIG. 3, the shimmer prevention blow mechanism 31 may be disposed immediately to the side of the lower end of the illumination 25. As further explained:

Shimmer prevention blow mechanism 31 can blow away shimmer 32 from above working hole 24 and the surroundings of illumination ring 25 by means of blow 33 . . .

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In view of the foregoing remarks, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under section 112.

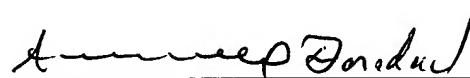
Claims 21 and 26-28 were provisionally rejected for obviousness-type double patenting in view of co-pending U.S. Patent Application No. 10/770,027. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration because the subject matter of the claims of the two pending applications would not have been obvious from one another.

In particular, the claims of the two applications recite very different techniques for preventing fluctuation of the inert gas from entering the illumination. Whereas the claims of this application recite a blowing device, the claims of the other application recite transparent shields. There is no basis for arguing that one technique would have been obvious from the other to a person of ordinary skill in the art.

Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 10/6/05



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